

## **The COLD WAR.**

When The Second World War ended, the USA and the USSR were masters of the world. Almost as soon as the war ended, relations between the USA and the USSR got colder. There was hostility between them for the next 45 years.

A real war between them could have meant the total destruction of each other and everybody else on Earth. A "cold war" was a war fought by every method except actual fighting. It was a war of words, propaganda and threats. Each side stockpiled weapons and forces which it hoped it would not have to use. Several real wars were fought, but by substitutes or allies. Never did USA fight USSR.

### **How Did the Cold War Begin?**

One of the main reasons for hostility lies in the history of each country before 1945. Stalin felt his country was always being threatened or attacked. He was bitter that the western Allies had not helped relieve pressure on the USSR by invading western Europe before 1944. Stalin's main aims were to make the USSR safe from invasion and to rebuild his shattered country. Americans regretted their isolation in the years between the wars.

They realised that they now had the power to play a large part in the world affairs. The lesson of the 1930s seemed to be that dictators must be faced and stopped, by force if necessary.

### **COLD WAR IN EUROPE from 1945 to 1949.**

The three leaders, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, met at Yalta early in 1945. Their armies were closing in on Germany. Roosevelt and Churchill had worked out their aims during the war in the 'Atlantic Charter'. These included a United Nations (UN) Organisation to keep peace in the world. Stalin had not taken part in these discussions. Americans believed strongly in democracy and were deeply hostile to Communism.

#### **Yalta.**

At Yalta, the three leaders discussed the UN, which Stalin agreed to join. He wanted the frontiers of Poland moved so that the USSR should gain some of eastern Poland. Roosevelt wasn't keen on this, but Churchill was ready to accept. It was agreed to divide Germany temporarily into four occupation zones: Soviet, American, British and French. Churchill feared that Roosevelt was too proSoviet. He had therefore pressed for a French zone. This would add another antiSoviet voice to the armies of occupation.

#### **Potsdam.**

After the defeat of Germany, the Allies met again, at Potsdam, in mid1945. Stalin, Truman and Attlee met. Arrangements were made for the trial at Nuremberg of captured Nazis. Some were sentenced to death, others to terms of imprisonment. Other Nazis were also punished: in the Soviet zone useful Nazis were kept on while others were shot without trial. In the western zones, four million people had to fill in a questionnaire about their activities over the previous 15 years.

Stalin was told about the atom bomb, which increased his suspicions and fear of the West. The Allies were worried about his taken-over of eastern Europe. The Polish Russian boundary had been moved westwards.

The USSR also, gained territory by taking land from Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia and Romania. Later, Truman and, Attlee were criticised for allowing this to happen. However, with Soviet armies all over eastern Europe, there was little they could have done to stop it.

### **Eastern Europe.**

Over the next three years, most of eastern Europe came under Soviet control. Often the next stage in a Communist take-over was even more sinister: and eastern European Communist leader would be called to Moscow, where he would 'disappear'. He Would then be replaced by a pro-Soviet, pro-Stalin leader.

The only countries where Stalin didn't get his own ways were Yugoslavia and Greece. In Yugoslavia, the local Communists had thrown out the Germans without much help from the Red Army. Their leader, Tito, set up a Communist state, independent of the USSR. He sent supplies to the Greek Communists, who were fighting a civil war against the Royalists. The Royalists were helped by the British. Stalin stayed out of this civil war as he had agreed with Churchill.

Stalin turned the countries of eastern Europe into satellites of the USSR. 'Cominform', set up in 1947, made sure that their Communist parties were controlled from Moscow. 'Comecon' controlled their economies for the benefit of the USSR. Poland had to send coal, Romania oil and Czechoslovakia machine tools to meet Soviet needs. Eastern European forces were united in the Warsaw Pact of 1955.

By 1948, the USSR was in control of half of Europe, it was an enormous 'buffer' zone for defence. To Westerners, this Soviet advance exceeded their worst fears.

President Truman declared his agreement with Churchill's speech. There were strong Communist parties in Italy and France too; who knew which country would fall to Communism next? In 1947, Truman set up the National Security Council to unite all three-armed forces, together with the Central Intelligence Agency. The job of the CIA was to work secretly to support proAmericans and undermine antiAmericans anywhere in the world.

### **The Truman Doctrine.**

The Truman Doctrine was the beginning of US policy of the Cold War. This policy was called 'containment'. The USA would help any country threatened by Communism so that Communism could not advance further. It was intended to support democratic countries.

They assumed that as soon as one country became Communist, the neighbouring one would follow, the 'Domino Theory'.

The Truman Doctrine also committed the USA to play a big part in world affairs. The USA, not the UN, would be the world's policeman.

### **Marshall Aid.**

Truman felt that Communism did well when people were poor and suffering. It could best be resisted by economic aid to build up prosperity. In 1947, General George Marshall, put forward a plan to give billions of dollars of aid to Europe. If it didn't, the USA would be left on its own to face the USSR. Western European countries had to be made strong enough to defend themselves. The US Congress was not keen on the idea, but after the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia they voted to give 4 billion dollars.

Views of the Marshall Aid: It could appear to be a generous gesture to an ailing Europe. So interesting was the idea that even the USSR applied for Marshall Aid, although it never received any. Clearly, one aim was to build up strong antiCommunist countries. Another view is that it helped US industry by creating markets for US goods.

### **Why did Berlin become a flash point?**

The main problem thrown up by the bad relations between the USSR and the USA was Germany. The four-power occupation set up in Yalta would work only if the four cooperated. The Russians had refused to allow anyone else into their zone. In this zone, factories were being dismantled and shipped to the USSR. Soon the people in the three western zones were starving. Britain and France, in great difficulties themselves, were reluctant to give food and money to Germany. The only solution seemed to be to allow some economic revival in the three Allied zones. Stalin was furious. The problem of its defeated population didn't move him, and he accused the West of re-erecting the Nazi state.

When the Allies proposed to help revive their zones by setting up a new currency, Stalin closed all access to Berlin. He hoped to force an Allied retreat, but Truman was firm. The Americans decided to ferry supplies into West Berlin by air. After 318 days, from June 1948 to May 1949, the Soviets backed down and opened up the route to the city.

### **CONTAINMENT AROUND The GLOBE.**

In 1949, the USSR had exploded its first atom bomb, so the US monopoly was broken. In 1949 China too had become Communist. Joseph McCarthy was leading a 'witch hunt' against suspected Communist sympathizers in the USA. In 1950, Truman was recommended that the USA make a great effort to oppose Communism anywhere in the world.

### **Why did Korea become a flashpoint?**

In 1945, the Japanese in North Korea had surrendered to the USSR, those in South Korea to the USA. Elections were held for a united Korea; separate governments were set up. Both dictatorships, Communist in the north, capitalist in the south. In 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea. Truman sent troops to nearby Japan and battleships to wait off the coast. He also asked the UN to condemn the invasion. The UN was able to order its forces to drive back the North Koreans.

Although the Korean war was a UN action, the USA provided the army, navy and air force. MacArthur landed behind North Korean lines and soon defeated them. North Korea was invaded. As the armies reached the Chinese border, Chinese leader Mao Zedong warned them to stop. They did not, and a large Chinese army attacked. Truman didn't want to get entangled in a war in Asia. He thought Europe was more important. MacArthur felt the battle against Communism should be fought in Asia first. He wanted to carry on fighting, and even talked of atom bombing China. As President of the USA, Truman was Supreme Commander. MacArthur was sacked in 1951 and a compromise cease-fire worked out in Korea in 1953.

## **The DULLIES YEARS.**

From 1953 to 1959, John Foster Dulles was American Secretary of State to President Eisenhower. He wanted to go further than just 'containing' Communism: he spoke of 'liberating' certain areas from Communism. This would be done by using propaganda to stir up rebellions in the satellites. Both the USSR and the USA built up stocks of nuclear weapons and tested bigger and bigger bombs. The launching of the Russian 'sputnik', a small satellite into orbit round the earth in 1957 shocked the Americans.

Dulles built up the ring of containment around the USSR by series of alliances. To Dulles, these alliances were defensive, part of containment. To the USSR, they appeared offensive, designed to hem in the Communist countries.

From 1955, the USSR was ruled by Nikita Khrushchev. He intended to live in 'peaceful coexistence' with the West and that he wanted to settle disputes through 'discussion, not through war'. In 1955, Soviet troops withdrew from their zone of Austria. Khrushchev met Western leaders personally in 'summit' meetings.

## **The Berlin Wall.**

In 1959, Khrushchev demanded that Allied soldiers leave West Berlin. The contrast between drab East Germany and prosperous West Germany was so great that some two million East Germans had crossed over to the West. In 1961, a wall was built across the city to make escape harder.

## **CUBA.**

Khrushchev's greatest threat to peace came in 1962, in Cuba. One of the worst sides of the US Cold War policy was that they supported some corrupt right-wing governments as long as they were antiCommunist. One of these was the brutal dictatorship of Batista in Cuba. In 1959 it was overthrown by Fidel Castro. Castro only wanted to be free of the US control. When pressure was put on Castro by the USA, he turned to the USSR for help. In 1961, the USA backed and attempted invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs.

The USSR had tested even bigger nuclear bombs. Soviet missiles in Cuba would tip the balance of power in their favour. The new President, John Kennedy, dared not appear weak in the face of this threat. He told his armed forces to prepare for a nuclear attack on the USSR, demanded that Khrushchev withdraw his missiles and sent the US navy to stop any more missiles getting through to Cuba. As Soviet ships with missiles on board steamed towards Cuba, the world waited for a nuclear holocaust.

Kennedy agreed to Khrushchev's offer. The blockade was lifted, the missiles crated up and sent back to the USSR. The 'Hot Line' was set up: a direct telephone link from the White House to the Kremlin in Moscow in 1963. The USSR and the USA signed a Test Ban Treaty to stop further testing of nuclear weapons in 1963.

## **VIETNAM.**

In 1954 the French were driven from their former colony of Indo-China. The rebels who had driven them out were mainly Communists. Indo-China was divided into four states: Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. It was hoped that the two Vietnams could later be united. Meanwhile North Vietnam became a Communist country. In South Vietnam power was in the hands of a small group, usually from the Roman Catholic landlord class and often corrupt. By 1950s, rebellion had broken out. The rebels called themselves the Vietcong and received help from North Vietnam and other Communist countries. The USA began to help the South Vietnamese government.

USA insisted on seeing the war as an attempt by North Vietnam, and behind them China, to take over first South Vietnam and then the rest of Asia. The 'domino' theory still held. The Vietcong used guerrilla tactics. By day, they mingled with the peasants; by night they mined roads and passed on information. They were on better terms with the South Vietnamese peasants than the Americans, who were foreigners. Supplies were carried from the North on bicycles down jungle tracks called the 'Ho Chi Minh Trail'. From 1965, there were massive bombing raids on North Vietnam to try to stop supplies to the South. In spite of all this the guerrilla tactics of the Vietcong and North Vietnamese worked. They gained control of more and more in the South Vietnam.

An anti-war movement gained strength. President Nixon proposed 'Vietnamisation', handing over the war to South Vietnamese. A peace was negotiated in Paris in 1973. By 1975, South Vietnam had fallen to the Communists. Communists also took over in Laos and Cambodia. This was mainly as a result of Nixon's decision to bomb these countries.

## **DETENTE in the 1970s.**

Detente means an 'easing of tension', in this case between East and West. The USA built closer relations with the USSR and China. Some agreements were reached on limiting the arms race.

The split between the USSR and China in 1960. For the USA meant that they could no longer regard Communism as a single enemy. For the USSR and Chinese there was the danger of being isolated, of being the odd one out of the three. Both tried to come to terms with the USA.

The Vietnam War was an important lesson for the USA. Despite their nuclear supremacy and huge wealth, they lost to a small poor country.

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) were held from 1969 between the USSR and the USA. This resulted in an agreement in 1972, SALT 1, limiting nuclear weapons.

The spirit of detente brought about the Helsinki Conference of 1975. the 35 states which attended agreed to guarantee all frontiers and respect human rights. To the USA it meant complaining about the suppression of the rights of individuals in the USSR. To the USSR it meant being allowed to get on with running their own country in their own way without interference. Relations began to deteriorate in the late 1970s. SALT 2 wasn't completed until 1979. Then in December 1979, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan and the USA refused to sign the Treaty.

In 1980s, a Second Cold War began. US forces intervened in the civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. New Cruise and Pershing missile system were invented and deployed among the USA's NATO allies. This led the USSR to develop new missiles. Reagan developed a massively expensive and complicated nuclear defence system called 'Star Wars'.

### **The End of the COLD WAR.**

Gorbachev wanted to carry out radical changes in the USSR. To do it, he had to remove the huge burden of the cost of the Cold War. If he- was more open with the West, real disarmament could take place because he would let Americans see that the missiles really were being dismantled.

In two meetings between Gorbachev and Reagan, at Reykjavik in Iceland in 1986 and at Washington in 1987, the Cold War came to an end. Gorbachev's policy for Eastern Europe had been letting countries decide their own forms of government and place in the world. In 1989 Communist governments in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria all fell. The Berlin Wall was torn down.